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Effective and Sustainable Programs of Change: A Case Study of Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-G)

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Effective and Sustainable Programs of Change: A Case Study of Gulu Women's Economic
Development and Globalization (GWED-G)

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Gulu, Uganda 2011
Spring 2013

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Abstract

This research explores the concepts of effectiveness and sustainability in the non-governmental organization (NGO) development sector by looking at two of the youth empowerment programs in the case study organization, Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-G). GWED-G is a women's rights organization that works in the Amuru, Nwoya, and Gulu districts of northern Uganda and implements various different programs all with vulnerable individuals. The reason that this organization has chosen to work with empowering youth is due to the dismal conditions that these youths faced during their upbringings, which occurred during the 20-year-long conflict that affected much of the northern Ugandan region. During the course of this study five different effectiveness and sustainability strategies that GWED-G employs will be examined and compared across two youth programs that GWED-G implements.

The main method of data collection employed in this study included internship with the case study organization GWED-G. Other methods used included interview, focus group discussions, participant observation and collection of secondary source material. This study took place over a period of four weeks and worked to include a well-representative sample of respondents that included GWED-G staff, donor organization staff, partner organization staff, beneficiaries and other knowledgeable sources.

After examining the case study organization, five different effectiveness and sustainability strategies were found, and became the basis of the findings of this research. It was found that if NGOs employ some of these strategies, especially those dealing with northern Ugandan youth, then they will be better equipped to help their target beneficiaries. Therefore their collective success would help to speed up the process of post-conflict transformation in the region. This research has determined that GWED-G effectiveness and sustainability strategies are generally successful. Other organizations should consider adopting these strategies for their own usages.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

NGO: Non-governmental organization

CBO: Community Based Organization

GWED-G: Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization

NUWYLEI: Northern Uganda War Affected Youths Livelihood Enhancement Initiative

Youth Empowerment and Human Rights: Youth empowerment for the realization and promotion of human rights in Northern Uganda

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

PRDP: Peace Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda

CBF: Community Based Facilitators

IDP camps: Internally Displaced Persons camps

IGAs: Income Generating Activities

ACORD: Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development

Explanation of Terms Used

Effectiveness: The ability of an NGO to succeed in meeting the main aims of a certain development program, both directly and indirectly, during the implementation period of the project. In the specific case of GWED-G, effectiveness will mean the ability of this organization to successfully empower their youth beneficiaries, both directly and indirectly, during the implementation period of the two target projects.

Sustainability: The ability of an NGO project to be able to implement projects that are able to continue the effective and positive changes made during the implementation period even after the project has officially ended. In the specific case of GWED-G sustainability will mean the ability of this organization to have the youth beneficiaries continue to be empowered and sustain themselves and their communities even after the specific GWED-G projects that target them have ended.

‘Lost Generation’: The ‘lost generation’ refers to those youths who were directly affected and who grew up during the most recent conflict in northern Uganda. Due to the trauma and the dismal conditions these youths experienced during the war, these young people lost their chances at education, economic success, and the chance to have normal childhoods. This term as used in this study broadly refers to those people who grew up during the war period and who were negatively affected by this conflict.

Youth: the Ugandan National Youth Policy defines youth as those persons who are aged 12-30, but both of the youth empowerment programs that will be discussed in this research provide different age ranges for youths that differ from the National Policy. Culturally youths are defined as those persons who require guidance but not direct support from their parents for their survival. For purposes of this study, those persons who will be considered youth will be those who grew up during the northern Ugandan conflict.

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Effective and Sustainable Programs of Change: A Case Study of Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization

The 22-year-long conflict in northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Ugandan government forces created a 'lost generation' of conflict affected youth who found themselves with scars of war that would inhibit their ability to prosper and contribute to their own well-beings. Some NGOs like the one that will be focused on in this study, Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-G), have created programs trying to rehabilitate and empower this group of war-affected young people that help to strengthen their self-reliance, human rights awareness, and economic empowerment. GWED-G is grassroots women's' rights based organization that prides itself on its close relationship and interaction with their beneficiary communities in the Gulu, Nwoya and Amuru regions, and as an organization strives to make its programs both effective and sustainable.

NGOs need to take care when working with this vulnerable group of young people to make sure that programs that intervene in the lives of youth are creating real and long-lasting change. This will ensure that what is really being done is creating youths that are self-empowering instead of creating an environment in which these youths are dependent on NGOs. This study examines the different strategies that GWED-G uses in its programs to make them both effective and sustainable through a focused analysis of two of the organization's two youth projects: the Northern Uganda War-Affected Youth Livelihood Enhancement Initiative (NUWYLEI); and the Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in Northern Uganda project (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project). The results of this study are able to better inform those working in the NGO realm what sorts of strategies and tools are effective in creating positive change in the lives of their beneficiaries through looking specifically at GWED-G as a case study. This research answers the question: How are the tools, mechanisms, and monitoring systems within GWED-G's youth empowerment programs able to promote long-term sustainable and effective change within the lives of their beneficiaries, and how can these be optimized?

Background

This section will be divided into sub sections in accordance to the different areas of background that need to be understood when looking at this research. These include sections relating to the northern Uganda conflict, the creation of a 'lost generation,' GWED-G, GWED-G's support for Youths, NUWYLEI, Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, dependency syndrome, participatory development, the Millennium Development Goals, the National Youth Policy, and the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda.

Northern Uganda Conflict

Conflict in northern Uganda has its roots in political and historical tensions between populations in the northern and southern parts of the country (Uganda Government, 2007, p. 24). After the rebel leader Yoweri Museveni (from southern Uganda) was able to gain control of the Ugandan presidency in 1986, marginalized northern groups formed rebellious movements such as the Holy Spirit movement and the Uganda People's Democratic Army and violently resisted Museveni's presidency (Trowbridge, 2009). However the only resistance movement army that has continued to persist to the present day has been the Lord's Resistance Army lead by Joseph Kony (Trowbridge, 2009). This group was successful in terrorizing the inhabitants of northern Uganda by kidnapping children from the northern region to fight as rebels in Kony's rebel army and by generally wreaking havoc in the region (Trowbridge, 2009). Due to the LRA attacks on the northern peoples of Uganda the Museveni government forced the northern civilians into Internally Displaced Persons camps (IDP camps) in order to protect the civilian population, but the reality of the camps was in actuality quite dismal. Total deaths in the camps in 2005 between January and July totaled 35,000 people which meant that the death rate in the camps were three time higher than the national average at the time (Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda, 2006, p. 14).

Even though there was a cessation of hostilities between the LRA and the Ugandan army in 2006, the devastating effects of this conflict lasted long after the ceasefire was signed (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2011, p. 4). In northern Uganda in 2011, poverty was estimated to be at 70% which was significantly higher than the national average at the time of 34%, (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012). This poverty along with the emotional distress of the conflict seriously affected the mental, social, and economic well-beings of the youth in northern Uganda and created a situation where many of

these young people in the region were lost on how to move forward from their past (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012).

The Creation of a 'Lost Generation'

The category of 'youth' in Uganda includes those individuals who are between the ages of 12 and 30 as determined by the National Youth Policy of Uganda, which means that the current youth of today's northern Uganda grew up during the time of the conflict (Government of Uganda, 2001). These current youths faced the hardships of living in the IDP camps along with the other negative consequences of the war which had negative effects on the traditions, beliefs, and morals of these young people (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 4). Many of these youths received limited educations because of abductions, and also since during the insurgency 60% of the primary schools were displaced which has now made it difficult for these youths to become economically self-sufficient and prosperous (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 5). A study conducted in 2009 showed that the average weekly income for a youth in northern Uganda was equivalent to 1.05 euro and that 42% of youth in 2009 went to bed without enough food (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 6). This creation of a 'lost generation' encouraged certain NGOs like Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-D) to create programs to help rehabilitate this group of young people and to help reverse some of the negative effects of the war.

Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-G)

Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization (GWED-G) is a grassroots organization that was started in 2004 by women who experienced the hardships of the war first hand, and currently operates in the districts of Gulu Amuru, and Nwoya (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012). GWED-G's overall mission is to allow grassroots peoples to strengthen their capacities so that they are "self-reliant agents of change" for development so that they can make decisions concerning their own development, health, and rights (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 2). While GWED-G works with many different groups of beneficiaries such as those who have been affected by HIV/AIDS and gender violence, the organization also has two youth empowerment programs that are currently trying to empower the capacity of those youths that were disempowered during the events of the conflict.

GWED-G's Support for Youths

The reason that GWED-G works with programs that support and empower the youth of northern Uganda is because they as an organization believe that the youth are going to be the next leaders of the nation and will be influential and important components in creating peace in the region (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2011). Through both economic empowerment and endowment of knowledge on rights and other useful topic areas, these youths will be able to end the vicious cycle of violence in the region (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 7). Also, GWED-G feels that by reintegrating and empowering young people, this will lead to the larger benefit of the region since youth comprise over half of the northern Ugandan population (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 8). Two of the main youth empowerment projects that GWED-G is implementing currently that this study will be working with are the Northern Uganda War Affected Youths Livelihood Enhancement Initiative, and the Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in Northern Uganda project.

Northern Uganda War Affected Youths – Livelihood Enhancement Initiative (NUWYLEI)

The NUWYLEI project is a youth project working in Gulu and Amuru districts that is being implemented in cooperation with the Dioceses of Northern Uganda (DNU) and is funded by Care International (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 1). The main aim of this project is to improve livelihood and general living conditions for 1375 “vulnerable youths” in post-conflict northern Uganda (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 1). Some of the thematic areas that youths will be trained and empowered in during the course of this project include livelihood, climate change, human rights, entrepreneurship, and role model mentoring (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 9).” Throughout the first year of the project 55 VSLA groups will be formed, and it will be through these groups that all other thematic trainings and support will be given (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012, p. 10). Currently as this study is being written, this NUWYLEI project is in its inception phase of introducing the project to the community.

Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in Northern Uganda project

The other youth empowerment project that will be focused on in this study is the Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in Northern Uganda project, which will be shortened to the 'Youth Empowerment and Human Rights' project for purposes of this study. The main aim of this project is to inspire young people to take part in human rights initiatives and activities so that they can understand problems that they have and find opportunities for a better life in the future (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2011, p. 2). Some of the objectives of this program relate to improving youth understanding of human rights, empowering youths to become leaders in their communities, and increasing the capacity of partner organizations to support youths in the region (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2011).” During the duration of the project the youth beneficiaries will participate in a variety of empowering activities like trainings, debate sessions, developing Income Generating activities and projects, and performing in dramas and dances (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2011, p. 6). As this study is being conducted this project is in its second year of implementation.

Throughout the duration of this program along with the NUWYLEI project GWED-G will employ certain strategies to promote the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs so that these youths will be empowered rather than having them fall into a trap of dependence on NGO support.

Dependency Syndrome

Dependency syndrome can broadly be described as a situation or belief where a group of people does not trust that they are able to solve their personal problems without help from outside organization or other actors (dependency and humanitarian relief: a critical analysis, p. 9). NGO's and community based organizations (CBO's) can be responsible for creating this idea of dependence in their beneficiary communities when they give handouts such as money which can make these beneficiaries feel as if they cannot survive without this sort of monetary support (Busiinge, 2010, p. 63). When NGO's and CBO's implement programs where they fail to help their beneficiaries to feel empowered, they actually help to create a culture where the communities that they work with lose incentive to initiate their own change and instead wait for handouts and support from the donor organization (Busiinge, 2010, p. 63). In Uganda it has been

found that there exists an idea that donors, the government, or family and village members are required to take care of certain beneficiaries since they do not believe that they are capable of taking care of themselves (Busiinge, 2010, p. 63). One reason that dependency syndrome poses a problem is because it negatively impacts the beneficiaries sense of confidence, which makes these projects unsustainable and therefore undermines the purpose of these development programs (Kopinak, 2013). Another problem of dependency syndrome is that dependence creates a need for extended assistance and continuous donations to support beneficiary communities which can greatly harm these groups of individuals if funding runs out or if the project is only short term (Kopinak, 2013). One way that organizations can fight against the development of dependency syndrome is by engaging communities that these agencies work with in participatory development; which is an idea that is actively employed for use in the GWED-G youth empowerment projects to fight against creating dependency in their beneficiary communities and which is why GWED-G is being used as a case study within this research (Malinga, 2011).

Participatory Development

Participatory development is a practice that engages the beneficiary community in their own progress and development ("Communities want to," 2011). This is a bottom-up approach that aims at building self-reliance and independence of beneficiaries and is entirely centered on active mobilization and participation of the communities at the grassroots level (Malinga, 2011). This type of approach moves away from the welfare-oriented development programs that can lead to dependency syndrome, and towards an empowerment approach that encourages communities to help solve their own development challenges (Malinga, 2011). Participatory development has been cited as helping to bring dignity and self-respect to beneficiaries along with leading to an increase in effectiveness of development programs ("Communities want to," 2011). Participatory development is used by GWED-G to prevent dependency syndrome and to make their programs both effective and sustainable which will not only help to empower youths but also support proper implementation of the various global, national, and local policies relating to youth and poverty prevention.

Millennium Development Goals

In 2000 the Millennium Summit convened in the United Nations headquarters in New York City included 189 member states of the United Nations to reflect on their collective

interests. After this summit the members issued the Millennium Declaration which outlined various steps needed to further human kind through human development which was later used to create the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which were to be met by the year 2015 by all nations (UNICEF). The eight millennium development goals include elimination of poverty and hunger, achieving higher levels of education, promoting gender balances and empowering women, combating disease, creating environmental sustainability, and creating global partnerships for development (UNICEF, 2013). The overall goal of these MDGs is to be able to reduce global poverty by half by the year 2015 (UNDP). When looking at the proposals for the two GWED-G youth projects, they state adherence to some of these goals like eradication of poverty and empowering women as part of their justification for the projects' implementations. But these goals can also help to justify this study since knowledge of how to best achieve the main aims of these programs that support the MDGs will be able to help other agencies to implement the MDGs in their own development projects.

The Republic of Uganda: The National Youth Policy

The importance of proper implementation, effectiveness, and sustainability of GWED-G youth programs can also be justified on a national level when looking at the National Youth Policy of Uganda. This National Youth Policy was created in 2001 to address the difficult social and economic situations in Uganda that the youth were facing (youth in this policy are defined as those persons between the ages of 12-30 years) (Government of Uganda, 2001). The reason that the Ugandan government in this policy states that it is important to create a strategy that helps these youths is because the youth are integral parts of the development process of the country and because they represent the future leadership of the nation (Government of Uganda, 2001). These NGOs as outlined in this policy are expected to help mobilize resources for youth programming, support youth entrepreneurship, and allow for youth development (Government of Uganda, 2001). So in the same way that understanding how to effectively and sustainably implement the GWED-G youth programs was necessary to help implement the MDGs, it is also necessary to help support this national Ugandan youth legislation.

Peace Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda

The social and economic situation of post-conflict northern Uganda which affects the youth of the region and those beneficiaries that this study will directly encounter is explained in the regional legislation called the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern

Uganda. Through the PRDP document the government of Uganda committed to stabilize and recover the northern part of the country through a set of programs and organizing frameworks that all stakeholders should “adopt when implementing their programs in the region (Uganda Government, 2007).” The four main objectives of the PRDP include revitalizing the economy of the region, empowering its inhabitants, and promoting peace (Uganda Government, 2007, p. viii). By following the processes outlined in the PRDP document, the government hopes to address the current instability problems in the northern region so that future conflict is prevented and development can take place (Uganda Government, 2007, p. 33). Through assessment that occurs in this study on potential effectiveness and sustainability strategies in youth programs, this research will be able to help NGOs to better promote the empowerment of northern Ugandan youths which is in line with the PRDP policy since youths are part of those who were most affected by the conflict; and the PRDP focuses on these types of vulnerable individuals.

Literature Review

Effectiveness

NGO effectiveness can be explained as the organization’s ability to meet the needs of their beneficiaries and to have proper program delivery (Busiinge, 2010, p. 22). This study will define effectiveness as the ability of an NGO program to meet the main aims of each project, both directly and indirectly, during the time that the project is taking place. It is important to look at effectiveness in this way because adherence to the main aims of a development program is necessary to truly help the program’s beneficiaries, and because failure to meet the main aim of a project is in turn the failure the project as a whole (“Communities want to,” 2011). Also, since GWED-G is being treated as a case study in this research, effectiveness for purposes of this study can more specifically be defined as the ability of GWED-G to meet the main aim of their youth empowerment projects which is ‘to empower the youths of northern Uganda.’ To assess effectiveness, five different main GWED-G implementation strategies are examined in this study to see how successful they are at promoting youth empowerment, both directly and indirectly.

In the study, “The Impact of Donor Aided Projects Through NGOs on the Social and Economic Welfare of the rural poor,” the author, Christopher Busiinge, analyzes the effectiveness of donor funded projects on the economic wellbeing of beneficiaries in the Rwenzori sub region of Uganda (Busiinge, 2010). Effectiveness of NGO development programs were found to be limited when the projects of an implementing organization were spread over

too large an area and when the implementing organization did not give these areas enough attention. This study also found that effectiveness of programs could also be affected by the donor agency since it was found that some donors were very inflexible, and therefore they were unable to cope and adapt to problems that were found on the ground (Busiinge, 2010, p. 88). Therefore the implementing NGOs found that it was sometimes difficult when working with these types of donors to have effective programs and this in turn hurt the beneficiaries (Busiinge, 2010, p. 88). These sorts of challenges related in the Busiinge thesis that relate to effectiveness will be used during the course of this research to compare and support the findings acquired during assessment of GWED-G's youth programs.

Sustainability

Sustainability is another key term of this study, the definition of which is used to explain the strategies of the GWED-G youth programs. Generally, NGO programs can be considered sustainable if they allow the beneficiaries of a program to persist and thrive even after the implementing partners have left and the program has officially ended (Busiinge, 2010, p. 15). So a program would be considered sustainable if the local communities that were under a particular development program are able to continue with their own development even if organizational and financial support has ended (Buturo). This is important since if a development program is not sustainable it can lead to dependency syndrome among beneficiaries and therefore a loss in the progress made during the program (Kopinak, 2013). Participatory development can help to make a project sustainable but so can other factors that will be discussed in the findings of this study. For the purpose of this research, sustainability will be defined as the ability for a development project to continue being effective and helping to empower beneficiary communities even after the project has ended.

In the Busiinge study, some challenges to sustainability were examined, and these challenges included a sense of dependency among beneficiaries due to a lack of empowerment and engagement of the communities in the leadership of the program. It was found in this study that projects that were centered on livelihood or economic activities were more sustainable because the beneficiaries were able to feel ownership of the money that was gained during the course of the project. However, human rights projects were less sustainable because the beneficiaries felt that the knowledge was imposed upon them and at the end of the project when the implementing organization left, so did the focus on human rights (Busiinge, 2010, p. 11).

Sustainability was focused on when assessing the GWED-G projects because it is necessary for projects that are effective to not lose that effectiveness once the program has officially ended, otherwise there would be no difference whether the organization had ever even entered the community or not since the beneficiaries would essentially be the same after the project ended as they were before the start of the project.

Justifications

In order to understand how to effectively run a non-governmental organization in a post-conflict society, it must first be understood how to best make a change that is both truly effective and sustainable, and how to monitor if such progress is being made. This study explores the effectiveness and sustainability strategies that are in place at GWED-G and assess their ability to provide positive results, whether directly or indirectly, within the NUWYLEI and Youth Empowerment and Human Rights projects. The purpose of this is to understand what sort of strategies work and do not work in running a proper non-governmental organization that uses participatory development and does not promote dependency syndrome. In this way this study can make a positive impact by helping NGOs that work in this field of interest to better understand changes that they might need to make to better serve the communities in which they work. The current literature that was reviewed for purposes of this research shows that there are effectiveness and sustainability gaps that exist within the realm of development NGOs in Uganda, but this research uses these gaps to better understand the case study organization and to realize why it succeeds where the organizations discussed in the literature did not. This research is meant to be productive because it will identify what strategies work in promoting effectiveness and sustainability and how they can be improved upon, which can then be used by other NGOs in the field to improve the implementation and organization of their own organizations and projects.

Two different youth programs, NUWYLEI and the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, were focused on during this study in order to provide room for contrast between the two programs along with a richness of information that could be gleaned by looking intently at both programs. If only one of these programs had been assessed during this study then the findings of the research would have been limited and it would have been easier for bias to influence the results of the study because there would be no other program to compare the facts and results that were gained. By looking at two programs this study was able to have the benefit

of comparison because all facts that were gained from one program could either be bolstered or confirmed by experiences in the other program, or the results could be contrasted where the facts differed. Also, it was important to look at both projects because NUWYLEI is a new program while the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project has been running for two years. So by looking at both, this research had the benefit of long-term experience with the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project but also the benefit of new experiences by being able to see the process of setting up one of these programs and of witnessing inception of these strategies within the community.

Conducting this research is also supported by the Millennium Development Goals, the National Youth Policy and the PRDP policies because both of the youth projects are in line with some of the main objectives of each of the above literatures. And since this study assesses the best ways of implementing these youth programs and creating real positive and lasting development it in turn- when looking at a larger scale- also understands how to best implement the Millennium Development Goals, the National Youth Policy and the PRDP.

Objectives

- To understand how the effectiveness and sustainability strategies in place at GWED-G operate in the Northern Uganda Women Empowerment and Youth and Livelihood Initiative Program
- To understand how these same strategies operate in the Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in Northern Uganda Program
- To assess the effectiveness of these different strategies used in these youth empowerment programs within GWED-G
- To assess the sustainability of the different strategies used in these youth empowerment programs

Methods

This section will detail the methods of data collection that were used during this four-week study, and the different categories of informants that were sought to keep this study well-rounded and well-informed. The different categories of informant that were sought for this research included: GWED-G staff members, beneficiaries/CBFs, implementing partners, coordinating partners, and outside experts on NGO work in northern Uganda. The different methods of data collection in this research include part-time internship, participant observation,

unstructured and structured interviewing, focus group discussions, and secondary sources. This section will be split into subheadings that relate to the methods of data collected.

Internship

This study was conducted while working as intern with GWED-G so that this study could benefit from understanding that was not superficial, but in depth since comprehension of the inner workings of the organization could be understood. However there was a difference between work being done as part of the internship and work that was done for this research.

At least four days a week were spent in the office and the length and duration of the time spent at work varied each day depending on field visits. Field visits for projects could last anywhere from three to eight hours depending on the location and the activities being conducted. The type of work that was done as part of this internship included: presentation of concepts and objectives during field visit meetings and presenting at trainings (See Appendix C); report writing that summarized proceedings during field visits; collection of recommendations from youths groups in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project; taking pictures for the organization for accountability purposes; and the writing of a story of change for the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project. Through these different activities it was better understood how the organization worked, and it also helped to reinforce and support the primary data that was collected during this research and the ideas therein.

Participant observation

During this study there were opportunities to act as a representative of GWED-G, so therefore it was possible to gain firsthand experience of how the projects of GWED-G are implemented and in what ways these projects are sustainable and effective. In this way this study is more informed because it has the benefit of personal experience along with outside critical analysis since it will not be conducted by someone with long-term interest in GWED-G's public appearance. Potential problems with this method included possible participant biased since there may have been instances where objectivity of analysis was compromised because of affiliation with this organization. But care was taken during this study to avoid this type of compromised analysis and even when these sorts of problems presented themselves, time was taken to re-analyze situations and consult outside and sources to make sure that the information that would enter this research was not biased or skewed.

Interviewing

During this research 13 different respondents were interviewed and the information gathered from these interviews was incorporated into the findings of this study. Both structured and unstructured interviews were used during this study in order to gain different types of information and to adapt to different situations encountered on the ground. Unstructured interviewing was used in cases where discussions with informants were informal and unplanned, which may have occurred because these conversations took place during field work or other working hours. The benefits to this technique were that information could be gathered from many different sources without the need to sit down and take time for a formal interview, which in some cases was not be feasible.

Structured interviewing was used when adequate time was allowed, and a formal appointment was made with the informant. In the cases of all structured interviews, consent forms were signed either by the informants themselves, or in the case of vulnerable informants a GWED-G staff member in charge of them would sign a consent form. Structured interviews had set questions and a clear direction of the types of information needed and were all conducted in places that were convenient for the informants.

Focus Group Discussions

When a particular issue needed to be addressed, or when a group opinion was relevant to a certain aspect of this research, then focus group discussions was be employed. During the course of this research three different focus group discussions were held. The first was made up of two CBF's from the NUWYLEI program and was conducted so as to get a holistic picture of the program and how it acted in all target areas (since these two CBF's came from Lamogi and most of the information before that time relating to CBFs came from Patiko). The second focus group discussion was made up of five members of the most successful youth group in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, and the third focus groups consisted of five members of one of the less successful youth groups in the program. These two focus group discussions were held so that a balanced perspective could be reached and so this research would not be biased by the opinions of just one youth group. In all focus group discussions there were problems with dominant respondents who overtook the focus of the conversations, but care was taken to direct the questions to other individuals and to remind the group that all members should

share their ideas and participate. This strategy was useful and overall the focus group discussions were successful.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources were used throughout this study to back up information and to fill in any gaps that may be left after collection of primary research. Care was taken to make sure that all secondary sources had credibility and were scholarly and relevant in nature. The types of sources that were used included scholarly articles, a master's thesis, GWED-G proposals and other documents such as reports, along with documents from other organizations like CARE International. Information that was gained through secondary sources included background information, data on previous and current projects including progress reports, and other research on the topic that could be contrasted and compared against the findings of this study.

Ethical Statements

Informed Consent

In the case of all formal interviews, consent forms were used and gathered either from the respondents themselves or in the case of vulnerable respondents, GWED-G staff members signed for consent to allow the information these respondents gave to be included within this study. Since the youths that were worked with during the course of this study would be considered vulnerable individuals because of their war-affected backgrounds, it was deemed necessary to have staff at GWED-G who was responsible for these youths to sign for consent for them to be interviewed. For informal discussions, consent forms were not used and therefore for ethical purposes the titles and names of these respondents will not be revealed. Even though consent may have been given by informants to use their names, only titles of these individuals will be used for ethical reasons so that respondents maintain their anonymity.

Compensation

GWED-G staff was consulted as to when it would be appropriate to give compensation to respondents and translators and the amount of appropriate compensation. It was decided that it was appropriate to give the members of Focus Group Discussions #2 and #3 monetary compensation because they had to travel to get to the destination of the interview. Also, compensation was given to a translator that was used from the local community during Focus

Group Discussion #2. GWED-G staffs were also compensated at times since there were occasions during this study that required the use of GWED-G motorcycles and drivers.

Translation

Both Focus Group Discussions #2 and #3 were translated and because of the nature of translation, some of the information gathered from these discussions may be paraphrased, or some information may have been excluded. However, both translators used were competent in the local language and therefore it is believed that the information gathered during these discussions is largely accurate.

Participant Bias

This study was conducted as a joint practicum and research project and therefore there was a possibility for participant bias on the part of the researcher since time was spent in this study working for the organization being assessed. This bias occurred because of the time spent working with the organization which skewed analysis of the study and tended to favor the organization. This became a problem because at the beginning of the research period all of the analysis was positive and there was no room for constructive criticism. However to avoid compromise of this study, outside sources were used to support the findings in this paper and to help create a balanced picture of the organization that was not colored by affiliation with the organization. However it was still found that most of the information gathered was still positive and this is a result of the reality of the research collected rather than a bias on the part of the research. These outside sources that were found to help to prevent bias were those that were not affiliated with GWED-G and therefore had more balanced opinions and critiques of the organization and its youth programs and strategies.

Findings and Analysis

This section will be divided into four major subheadings related to the objectives of this study. These subheadings include: strategies in the NUWYLEI project; strategies in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project; effectiveness of these strategies in the youth empowerment projects; and sustainability of these strategies in the youth empowerment projects.

Strategies in the NUWYLEI project

This section specifically relates to the five main effectiveness and sustainability strategies that are used in GWED-G, and explains how each of these five strategies operates specifically within the NUWYLEI project. Some of the five strategies are split up into sub sections that will

help to explain the complexities of each strategy and the uniqueness of how they function in NUWYLEI. The five main sub headings (same as the five main strategies) are: strengthening of beneficiary communities; using a multifaceted approach; inclusion of local governments; strong internal governance balanced with entrustment of responsibilities; and open dialogues with partner organizations. The subheading ‘strengthening beneficiary communities’ is further split into the sub headings that include use of community based facilitators (CBFs); empowering beneficiaries to support their communities; and working in prior GWED-G project areas. The section, ‘strong internal governance balanced with entrustment of responsibilities’ is split into sub headings that include: thorough internal monitoring; and empowering staff members to take the lead on their own activities. Then the section ‘open dialogues with partner organizations’ is split into the sub headings: cooperation with implementing partners; and engaging donor/coordinating partners.

Strengthening beneficiary communities.

Use of Community Based Facilitators (CBFs). The basis of the NUWYLEI project lies in its use of Village Savings and Loan (VSLA) groups that will be bases for the project since VSLA is used as an entry point (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). These groups are made up of the beneficiaries of the NUWYLEI program and have been created during the onset of the project by Community Based Facilitators (CBFs) that are employed by GWED-G (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). When GWED-G chose these CBF a part of this project, the main criteria was that each CBF was a resident of the target area where groups were to be formed (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). So for each Parish there exist two CBFs who are each required by terms of their employment to create four VSLA groups (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). The reason that these CBFs are required to be residents of the communities in which they work is because it is believed that since these CBFs live in the beneficiary communities and know these communities they will be more engaged in their work and will be able to continue to help these communities even after the project has ended (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). This technique of employing youth community members will also help to strengthen the CBFs because these individuals are also war-affected youth (another criteria for selection to be a CBF was that the person was a youth), and even though they are not considered beneficiaries of this program, the hope is that through the trainings and experience

that they receive during participation in NUWYLEI they will also become more empowered than they were before inception of the project in their area (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Empowering beneficiaries to support their communities. Beneficiaries of the NUWYLEI project receive various trainings that include human rights, VSLA, agricultural training, and peace building (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012). It is the hope that these individuals through this training will be able to help train their fellow youths and other community members in the same way so that they can also benefit from the positive aspects of the NUWYLEI project (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). These youths are being empowered through capacity building activities in the project so that they can become leaders in their communities which will lead to greater effectiveness of the project because it will reach a wider audience and more youths than just those who are able to be financially supported by NUWYLEI (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). This technique of empowering youths to multiply the good effects of the program will also be more sustainable because it strengthens the entire community and makes it more prosperous, which will mean it will be less likely for these youths to fall back into poverty (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Working in prior GWED-G project areas. In two of the areas in which this project operates, there have been previous GWED-G projects that have targeted different groups of vulnerable individuals. In Lamogi before the start of the NUWYLEI project, there was a community action program that formerly employed some of the current CBFs of the NUWYLEI project (CBF Focus Group, personal communication, April 24, 2013). In Patiko a different project was conducted, called the HOPE project, which was also a CARE International funded project like NUWYLEI (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013) that focused on giving support to those who became disabled during the northern Uganda conflict. There are also NUWYLEI CBFs who live in Patiko who are former employees of the HOPE project, and as stated by one of these CBFs, the only major difference between the objectives of the HOPE project and the NUWYLEI project was that the former worked with disabled persons while the latter focuses on youth (CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013). The reason for working in a previous project area is because it helps to further empower that community by giving aid to different members that may have been left out of the benefits of the first project

(GWED-G Executive, personal communication, April 23, 2013). It also helps to promote sustainability because while the new project is forming, GWED-G staff can still help and monitor those former beneficiaries that were part of the other project (CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013). This strategy can also help promote effectiveness because the CBFs that now work on NUWYLEI who were former employees of the HOPE project already have experience working with the organization and therefore are able to teach the new CBFs that have not worked with the organization before, some of the practical knowledge they have already acquired which makes for a smaller learning curve (CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013).

Multifaceted approach to empowerment. In the NUWYLEI project there are eight different thematic areas that the youths will be trained on during the course of the project, but VSLA and economic empowerment is still the base of this program, in which the human rights and peace building aspects build upon (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). The reason that this project incorporates all of these different types of support is because it is felt that in order to empower someone, it is important to empower the whole person in ways that reinforce each other (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). For example, VSLA is used as an entry point because it not only allows for the youths to save and support themselves economically but because it also allows for a forum where these youths can further discuss the other trainings they have received in the other thematic areas. Then once these youths have fostered a savings culture, the program is scheduled to give them seeds so that they are able to raise enough capital to later save so that they can invest in other livelihood initiatives. Then, the peace building and conflict resolution training is incorporated so that the youths will be able to handle problems that may arise within their groups and in their larger community so that they can deal with these problems in a way that will be productive (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). This is supposed to bring about sustainability of the project because it will give youths a strong economic base so that they are able to then focus on promoting human rights and helping their larger communities (CARE Staff, personal communication, April 30, 2013). Without economic base youths will be too worried about food to be able to focus on human rights trainings, but without human rights trainings then the youths will never be able to grow and solve their own problems and mitigate violence in their communities (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013).

Inclusion of local government. Engagement of local sub county government officials is one of the main aspects of this project, and GWED-G is able to gain this support by being transparent in their implementation. The LC-III's down to the LC-I's along with the Parish Chiefs, Youth Counselors, Community Development Officer, and the Chairman on Youth among others are all engaged fully during the initiation of the program and in the hiring process of the CBFs (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Whereas the other implementing partner of the NUWYLEI project, the Diocese of Northern Uganda (DNU), did not incorporate the sub county in the CBF selection process, GWED-G included these officials because they felt that they would be more supportive of the project if they had a role in the hiring procedure (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Strong internal governance balanced with entrustment of responsibilities.

Thorough internal monitoring. The staff at GWED-G has strong internal monitoring mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the projects and to ensure that project staff is performing well. These monitoring mechanisms include weekly review meetings that convene every Monday and include the entire staff. During these meetings each staff member is able to present what activities they participated in during the previous week, the challenges that they faced, reasons for not completing stated activities, along with their plans for the week to come. These meetings are also a time that the executive director is able to monitor progress and give advice and suggestions to staff when needed and necessary. Other mechanisms include monthly or quarterly meetings for each project depending on the frequency of activities in this project; reports that help to identify gaps and problems occurring in the implementation process; and stories of change that are written quarterly by staff that highlight some of the stories of beneficiaries that have been helped by each program (Executive Director, personal communication, April 15, 2013). These mechanisms help to identify potential problems and gaps that exist within programs that will challenge effectiveness and sustainability and allow for the management to address these issues in a timely way (Executive Director, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Empowering staff members to take the lead on the own activities. GWED-G has a very strong internal governing body with members that work as teachers and monitoring partners. Not only do executives give advice but they constantly monitor progress, however management is not overbearing and considerable freedom and authority is given to individual project officers

and other staff (Executive Director, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Each staff member is given full responsibility over their own projects and even though the executive is there to correct mistakes and to monitor their progress they do not dictate to the staff how to do their respective jobs (Executive Director, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Staff is also empowered through trainings in which staff are encouraged and allowed to attend, and these trainings are meant to build their respective capacities. Staff is also encouraged to bring their own ideas to discuss with the rest of the employees in forums like Monday meetings. All of these forms of empowerment are used in order to encourage and empower the GWED-G employees to want to work hard and invest themselves into the organization (Executive Director, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Cooperation with partner organizations.

Cooperation with implementing partners. GWED-G works with DNU as their implementing partner on this project (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012). Both used the same baseline survey to come up with their own implementation strategies; however these strategies differ as shown in the different ways that the CBFs were chosen (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). DNU and GWED-G work together as partner organizations to share ideas, and plans are in place for them to have coordination meetings with one another along with exchange visits between the youth groups of the two organizations (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). By working together these two organizations are able to share ideas to make their respective programs more effective and sustainable.

Engaging donor/coordinating partners.. The coordinating partner of this organization is CARE International and even though CARE is in control of the funding for the NUWYLEI project, GWED-G works together with CARE as a full partner (CARE Staff, personal communication, April 30, 2013). The staff at GWED-G provides suggestions and gives recommendations to CARE because this organization knows best what is happening on the ground (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Because GWED-G works to have an open relationship with the coordinating organization it hopes to be able to encourage this organization to make changes in the project that will be effective, long term, and relevant for the beneficiaries (GWED-G Executive, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

Strategies in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project

This section specifically relates to the five main effectiveness and sustainability strategies detailed in the last section, and explains how each of these five strategies operate specifically within the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project. The five main sub headings of this sub section will be the same as those in the previous section. However unlike the last section, the subheadings for ‘strengthening beneficiary communities’ is further split into the sub headings that include beneficiaries become the leaders; and empowering beneficiaries to support their communities. All other sub headings will be sectioned in the same way as the ‘strategies in NUWYLEI’ section of this study. When one of the five strategies is found to be implemented in a similar way to the NUWYLEI project, “This strategy works in the same was as in the NUWYLEI project” will be written so as not to repeat information.

Strengthening of beneficiary communities.

Beneficiaries become the leaders. Youth groups in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project are empowered through capacity-building activities to have them become their own leaders. These groups are encouraged to come up with their own ideas for income generating activities (IGAs) and GWED-G only supports them on these activities (See Appendix A) (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). This program is designed to provide the type of support that the youths deem necessary rather than having a strict plan that will guide the youths’ actions. Youths receive trainings during this project that promote their leadership skills so that they own their own projects and do not become dependent on GWED-G to empower them (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). The youths also choose one leader for each group without any outside influence which is used so that these youths accept the leadership and do not feel as if it is being imposed upon them (Youth Leader, personal communication, April 27, 2013).

Empowering beneficiaries to support their communities. This works in a similar way to the same strategy in the NUWYLEI project.

Multifaceted approach to empowerment. There are components of both human rights and livelihood to this project but the base of this youth empowerment project is human rights training and awareness (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). However even though human rights is a focus of this project, the livelihood aspect is incorporated in the form of IGA support and training on VSLA because it is felt that without economic stability

these youths will not be able to enjoy the rights that they learn about through the project (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). The different trainings that are provided to these youths also support one another because the rights trainings help to mitigate conflict within the groups that might arise when working with their IGA and VSLA activities (Youth Leader, personal communication, April 27, 2013). The reason that human rights is focused on in this project however is because when you look at how these youths were affected during the war, their rights were abused. There were cases after the war of formerly abducted children getting angry and killing others simply out of anger, which resulted from the lawlessness that was imposed on them during the conflict (GWED-G Executive #2, personal interview, April 23, 2013). So therefore GWED-G is trying to re-establish this sense of dignity and an understanding of rights that will correct the mal-effects the conflict had on these youths (GWED-G Executive #2, personal interview, April 23, 2013). Without this type of base then the underlying psychological problems that have lead youths to lawlessness (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012) will continue and economic empowerment will not be as effective and will not be able to last for the long term (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

Inclusion of local government. The same local government officials are included in the project in a similar way that they are in NUWYLEI project except that the local government was not involved in the hiring process and is not part of the implementing team in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project. However the staff of the project still works to include local government and try to make sure that they are aware of the activities in the area so that they can support the project (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

Strong internal governance balanced with entrustment of responsibilities. This strategy works in the same way as in the NUWYLEI project.

Cooperation with partner organizations.

Cooperation with implementing partners. The implementing partners for the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project is the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC), Kitgum NGO Forum and Pader NGO Forum (Gulu Women's Economic Empowerment and Globalization, 2011). The closest of these partners to GWED-G is JPC and this was the organization that was focused on to look at partner relations (GWED-G Staff #2, personal

communication, May 8, 2013). Exchange visits have been held between JPC and GWED-G in order to allow for an open channel for communication between the organizations (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Engaging donor/coordinating partners. The relationship with the coordinating partner in this project is the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) is one of superiority and inferiority, with ACORD acting as the superior organization (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). However despite the power complexities of the relationship between ACORD and GWED-G, GWED-G still tries to inform and influence the decisions of ACORD so that they suit the real and present needs of the beneficiaries (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Effectiveness of these Strategies in the Youth Empowerment Programs

This section assess how effective the five strategies are at promoting youth empowerment both directly and indirectly by using examples and facts collected from both the NUWYLEI and the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights projects. This section is split into five subsections relating to each of the five strategies that were previously introduced, and each of these subsections (when appropriate) will further be split into the different complex dimensions of each strategy that have been understood through the prior exploration of the two youth programs. The section ‘strengthening of beneficiary communities’ will be split into the sub headings: values of different methods of leaders; empowering beneficiaries to support their communities; and working in a previous GWED-G project areas. The section ‘strong internal governance with entrustment of responsibility’ will be split into the sub headings: monitoring mechanisms; and building staff capacity; The ‘cooperating with partner organizations’ section will be split into the sub sections: cooperating with implementing partners; and choosing cooperative donor/coordinating partners.

Strengthening of beneficiary communities.

Values of different methods of leadership. The methods of choosing leadership in the NUWYLEI project and conversely in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project differ in the nature of the leadership. In the NUWYLEI program the CBFs create and lead the different youth groups and are the mediators between GWED-G and the beneficiaries, and are not a member of the beneficiary community themselves (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). However the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project creates a

situation where the leaders are the beneficiaries themselves and the elected leader of each group becomes the main contact person in case of conflict (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

The good that exists in both techniques relates to the presence of these leaders within the beneficiary communities. When speaking to a CBF from Patiko who had previously worked on the HOPE project, he said that the presence of CBFs made it possible to provide immediate support to beneficiaries whenever they needed it since he lived close to them. Therefore he would even be awoken at night in order to assist beneficiaries who were victims of gender based violence (CBF #1, personal communication, April 16, 2013). In the same way, one of the leaders of a group in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Program said that he was able to give immediate support to his fellow youth, and because he knew these people and was a part of the community for so long, people felt comfortable coming to him for advice (Youth Leader, personal communication, April 27, 2013). This strategy of local leaders is effective because these leaders are living with the community and therefore are able to address any problems that arise easily because of their close proximity to beneficiaries.

Empowering beneficiaries to support their communities. Both of the projects seemed to be effective in being able to expand their projects to provide for the benefit of the entire community that was being worked in and not just those beneficiaries that were directly involved. The way that GWED-G achieved this was through capacity building of the beneficiaries so that they would be able to be empowered to help their fellow community members (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). When speaking with one of the groups from the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project they said that the support they received from GWED-G and the trainings on peace building and leadership gave them the inspiration to help their fellow community because they felt that they were now leaders and that they had to share the knowledge that they gained from the program (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group Discussion #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). Before the start of this program the youths of this group said that they were lazy, but now they volunteer in the community by assisting with manual labor like helping to build roads (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group Discussion #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). Similar stories came from members of the NUWYLEI group of CBFs when they were talking about their previous work with GWED-G. In the previous

community action program in Lamogi, the youths used to be leaders for their entire communities because as time went on the community started to look to them as being leaders, and because of this previous experience they said that they would continue to help their wider communities even in the new NUWYLEI project (CBF Focus Group, personal communication, April 24, 2013).

This is effective because the beneficiaries or the community members including other youths that are directly in contact with the youth project are able to become agents of change and help others so that a larger beneficiary community can be created (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Working in prior GWED-G project areas. This strategy was only employed in the NUWYLEI project since two previous projects had been implemented in two different areas now covered by this project, but it was a useful technique since it continues to further help the same communities and in that way was able to strengthen those communities. The CBFs that had previously worked with the community action program in Lamogi said that the skills that they learned during this program would help them to become better leaders in the new project in the area, and the same was said for those CBFs that had previously worked with the HOPE project in Patiko (CBF Focus Group, personal communication, April 24, 2013; CBF #1, personal communication, April 16, 2013; CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013). This would mean that these new leaders would have less of a learning curve when working with this new project and would be able to lead fairly effectively even from the beginning of the project. They would also be able to teach other new CBFs and impart their knowledge onto them which would help to speed up their learning curves (CBF #1, personal communication, April 16, 2013).

Effectiveness of this technique was also seen when looking at the benefit on these communities that are being worked in. When projects continue to focus on different groups in a community, the community is able to grow and prosper which makes for a more positive and productive environment for the current beneficiaries (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). If the new beneficiaries have a more positive environment then they will be able to be more active and engaged in the program at hand (Patiko Sub county Official, personal communication, April 16, 2013). This is supported by one scholarly source that states that long term programs are needed in order to truly solve the fundamental problems in communities (Buturo).

Multifaceted approach to empowerment.

Both of the youth empowerment programs used multifaceted approaches where they included aspects of their programs that focused on economic empowerment along with aspects that focused on psychological and emotional empowerment that included such trainings as human rights and peace building. This approach was effective because each aspect was able to support the other. For example, youth group #2 in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project said that VSLA allowed them a meeting place every week to talk about other aspects of the program like human rights and IGAs (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #2, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

Economic empowerment aspects are effective because it allows them to create stability in their own lives so that they are able to actively participate in the project that is being implemented (CARE Staff #1, personal communication, April 30, 2013). VLSA is usually used as an entry point because it allows for youths to be able to cultivate a savings culture which then allows for other sorts of activities like involvement with IGAs since the money earned from these types of activities will not be squandered (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). IGAs are also needed in these types of programs because without activities like IGAs, the money put into VSLA would be too small to promote real saving since the youths would not have enough capital to save adequate funds (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). So a well-rounded approach to economic empowerment is effective because each aspect like VSLA and IGA reinforce one another.

However, as stated by some of the members of the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, human rights trainings are also effective as these trainings have decreased levels of violence, and conflicts among themselves (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). . They said that there was no sense of community or togetherness before these sorts of trainings (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). A similar sentiment was shared by one of the local sub county officials of the area who were involved in the Youth Empowerment for Human Rights project, because he said that the program was effective because through massive sensitizations and performances like for dance and drama GBV had decreased in the area (Awach Sub county Official, personal communication, April 25, 2013). Also, he said

that the youths were more productive and the levels of IGAs being performed by youths have increased (Awach Sub county Official, personal communication, April 25, 2013). GWED-G was also able to help these youths to have a sense of competition rather than having them sit passively by, and has made them more productive (Awach Sub county Official, personal communication, April 25, 2013).

A balance of different types of support is important to having an effective project which is an idea that is also shared by the implementing partner of the NUWYLEI project. He said that it is important to have both “software (human rights trainings)” and “hardware (physical contributions like seeds and other monetary assistance)” aspects of each project in equal measure because considering how poor these people are they need some start up income so that they can prosper in other areas in human rights (DNU Staff, personal communication, April 29, 2013). But it is also good to have software because it builds capacity instead of creating dependency (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013).

Inclusion of local government.

Inclusion of government helped GWED-G to provide more effective implementation because local government when involved is able to be a part of the monitoring and implementing process. Because the local government was involved in the CBF selection process and was a large part of the inception of the project they seemed to be very enthusiastic about the project starting up in their area. During the inception meeting in Patiko the LC-III gave praises to GWED-G and offered his support not only to the staff of GWED-G to help in monitoring, but also said that he was willing to support the CBFs in any way that he needed. Another Patiko sub county official that was part of the NUWYLEI project was also very supportive of GWED-G and had a great deal of confidence in GWED-G’s capacity to do this project well (Patiko Sub county Official, personal communication, April 16, 2013) . He even said that the sub county officials along with GWED-G share ideas and that the local government feels like full implementing partners in NUWYLEI. They help in mobilizing, monitoring, and advising the youth (Patiko Sub county Official, personal communication, April 15, 2013). This is a very valuable resource because it gives youths more assistance when they need even if GWED-G is not available to help the beneficiaries or CBFs directly (CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013).

The importance of local government involvement can be seen when looking at the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project because in this program it was found that the local

government did not feel very involved in the project. In the Youth Empowerment for Human Rights project, one of the higher level sub county officials in the project area felt that he was not involved in the Youth Project and expressed his desire to sign a MOU and to be involved in the youth project (Awach Sub county Official, personal communication, April 25, 2013). He said that GWED-G attempts to involve local government to some extent but that not enough attention is placed on local government currently and he is even unaware of what GWED-G is currently doing in his sub county. This affected effectiveness because the official said that if he was involved he would be willing to help monitor and help with implementation of the program (Awach sub county official, personal communication, April 25, 2013). This also was true of the LC-1 who was in charge of Youth Group #2. The members of Youth Group #2 said that they received no support from local government, and not even the LC-1 in their area (Youth Empowerment and Human Right Focus Group #2, personal communication, May 2, 2013). Local government would even say that youths were lazy and hopeless and negative members of the communities and generally there was a feeling of abandonment when talking to this youth group (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #2, personal communication, May 2, 2013). However, another youth group in this project that had support of their LC-1 (because this person was a family member to the leader of the group and therefore may have had personal reasons for being involved) said that this really helped them to resolve conflict and also to be able to get advice when GWED-G was not available (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, May 2, 2013).

There was a great deal of appreciation expressed by those informants who had worked with local government in the past in the NUWYLEI project and with the youth group that worked with the LC-I in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project because these officials were able to provide support when GWED-G was not available (See Appendix B). However it can be seen that when local officials are not involved they have less of an incentive to intervene and this can negatively impact beneficiaries who feel alienated. This is supported in the Biisinge thesis because he found that when local government officials were ignored or alienated they had less of an incentive to monitor projects and would not intervene when the projects started failing (Biisinge, 2010, p. 74).

Strong GWED-G internal governance with entrustment of responsibility.

Monitoring mechanisms. The use of many different types of monitoring mechanisms are effective in detecting problems within the organization and staff members and therefore allows for corrections to be made. The Monday meetings though are possibly one of the most effective measures of monitoring because they happen so frequently and therefore the executive staff is able to have direct lines of communication with project officers (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). During the Monday meetings if staff has not been able to fulfill their previously stated goals of the last Monday meeting then they are required to explain the reasons regarding this. Because the minutes of this meeting are written and filed for future use, the executive is able to have in writing the intended work plan of each project officer and staff member for the previous week and makes crosschecking of activities more effective and timely (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). There are so many different ways of monitoring projects because it is important to make sure that the projects are on track and sticking to their objectives and financial outlines (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). The importance of internal monitoring is expressed in one scholarly article when it was stated that, “for NGOs' potential and impact to materialize fully, they must have more effective systems of internal monitoring and self-evaluation (Buturo).” The effectiveness of this strategy was also supported by one NGO expert that said that the strength of an organization lies in its ability to monitor what is actually happening on the ground, failure to do so will result in ineffectiveness of the program (NGO Expert, personal communication, April 18, 2013).

Building staff capacity.

Time is also spent on increasing staff capacity by allowing them to participate in different trainings so that they are not only prepared to handle their own GWED-G projects well but to also be prepared for when they leave the organization. This is done so the staff knows that GWED-G is invested in them and not just see them as an employee (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Because the Executive Director is hands off each project manager knows that the success that has been done is entirely theirs which in turns makes them invested and work harder in their projects because they want to be able to succeed (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). When the staff then knows that they are being treated with dignity then they are more willing to invest in their projects because they

feel like they are a part of the solution and are no longer just working for a salary (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

Cooperation with partner organizations.

Cooperation with implementing partners. In both of GWED-G's youth programs there exist strong linkages between this organization and its implementing partners. This helps in promoting effectiveness in these programs because an open dialogue makes it easy for GWED-G to learn from the successes and challenges faced by those organizations that are implementing similar youths programs. One example of this type of sharing of information is the use of exchange visits between different groups of beneficiaries, which is a technique that is used in or is planning to be used in both the NUWYLEI and the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights projects (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

During exchange visits these beneficiaries are able to gain inspiration from these groups and the two implementing agencies associated with those groups are able to learn from one another through observation and understanding of how these different types of projects can be implemented, and even sometimes find solutions to the challenges that these two organizations have been facing (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). In the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, exchange visits have already been used to be able to compare the groups in JPC to those in GWED-G which have been largely successful, and although the NUWYLEI project is currently in its inception period there are still plans to have exchange visits with DNU once the project has gone underway (GWED-G staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). Other ways that GWED-G and implementing partners share information is through collaboration meetings and workshops which these partners participate in together (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). Since this type of open communication allows for the implementing partners to share ideas and exchange experience, it makes them both more effective because they are able to better deal with their own challenges and learn even better ways of promoting youth empowerment (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Choosing cooperative donor/coordinating partners. As a rule of the organization, GWED-G does not work with donors or coordinating agencies that are not willing to negotiate or have open conversations with them. This is due to problems that can result when working with a donor that imposes its ideas on their implementing partners rather than being willing to learn

from those implementing partners. The problems that result can be that since donor organizations are somewhat disconnected with the real situation on the ground, if they are not willing to listen to the implementing organization that does have this connection to the grassroots communities, then they may try to implement projects that are ineffective because they are not addressing the proper beneficiary concerns as stated in the Busiinge thesis (Busiinge, 2010).

When GWED-G was working with CARE International in the concept phase of the NUWYLEI project, there was a problem with the original proposal that was produced by CARE because it was written by looking at the national statistics of youths which was not completely relevant to the situation on the ground (GWED-G staff #1, personal communication April 15, 2013). In order to ensure that the project would be relevant, GWED-G staff encouraged CARE to conduct a baseline survey in the intended beneficiary communities to find out what the real needs were in the local populations (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). Since CARE was willing to accept this suggesting and work in full partnership with GWED-G, it was decided by GWED-G that CARE would be accepted as a donor (GWED-G Staff #1, personal communication, May 15, 2013). This is an effective strategy because as shown in this situation, cooperating with the donor helped to make the program more effective and relevant because the baseline survey conducted by CARE actually changed the original proposal and some of the thematic areas that the project would address because they were deemed irrelevant by the survey (CARE International, 2012).

A similar situation happened with the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project because the donor organization, ACORD, originally wanted the project to focus solely on human rights even though a multifaceted approach that included aspects of increasing youth livelihood would be more effective and necessary (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013). Through the open dialogues that ACORD was willing to take part in with GWED-G staff, GWED-G was able to convince this organization to change their program to include livelihood which as explained earlier, creates multifaceted programs that are overall more effective than purely human rights programs (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). Even during the implementation process, ACORD has learned a great deal from GWED-G and due to the open lines of communication they have been able to change and tailor their programs to suit what the community actually needs (ACORD Staff Member, personal communication, May 13, 2013).

If GWED-G were to accept to work with donors on the youth empowerment projects that were not willing to have open dialogues with GWED-G, then effectiveness of the resulting programs could have been seriously compromised. This is supported by ideas in the Busiinge thesis that states that organizations that work with uncooperative donors tend to find themselves more worried about the interests of the donor organization rather than the beneficiaries which tends to hurt those beneficiary communities involved (Busiinge, 2010). Even though GWED-G may be losing some potential money by being selective with their choices of donor partners, in the long run this will help them to continue to truly focus on their beneficiaries and to continue to support their empowerment rather than spending resources in supporting the donor.

Sustainability of these Strategies in the Youth Empowerment Programs

This section assess how sustainable the five strategies are at promoting youth empowerment both directly and indirectly by using examples and facts collected from both the NUWYLEI and the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights projects. This section will be split into the same five major sub sections as the previous segments. The ‘strengthening of beneficiary communities’ will be split into two subsections which will be called: challenges to sustainability when looking at community leadership; and working in prior GWED-G project areas. All other sections will be formatted in the same way as the ‘effectiveness of these strategies in the youth empowerment programs’ segment.

Strengthening of beneficiary communities.

Challenges to Sustainability when looking at community leadership. Even though it was found earlier that both methods of community leadership employed by the different youth programs are effective, there may be trouble when looking at the issue of sustainability. One of the staff members that works with the DNU youth program stated that he has worked with both types of youth leaders before, some were hired by the implementing agency while some that he had worked with were members of the beneficiary community (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). He said that while there were benefits to each approach it was more sustainable to employ CBFs rather than to have leaders of youth groups that were beneficiaries themselves. This was because after the project ended the CBFs that were hired ended up volunteering and continuing to help those beneficiaries that they worked for, but the leaders who were beneficiaries tended to act like other beneficiaries and felt the need for a new project to empower them (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). This

would make these leaders less effective once the project had ended and less able to support other prior beneficiaries (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013).

But despite this criticism however, leaders from both projects professed their interest in further supporting their fellow youths once the programs had ended. The youth leader from Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Youth Group #1 stated how even if the GWED-G training ended tomorrow he would still continue to support the youths in his community because they are his people and they will still need assistance (Youth Leader, personal communication, April 27, 2013). However when talking to two of the beneficiary leaders in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project they both continued to ask for linkage to other development organizations once the project ended whereas those CBFs that were engaged in conversation during this study never asked for assistance for themselves but spoke far more about the beneficiaries themselves. Therefore there may be merit to the argument that the use of CBFs are more sustainable than the beneficiary leaders.

Working in prior GWED-G project areas. Since the NUWYLEI project is working in areas where previous GWED-G project operated, the GWED-G staff were able to continue to monitor and support those beneficiaries of the previous project along with beneficiaries in the new project. This helps to strengthen the access to support that these beneficiaries are able to have and further strengthens the communities which helps the beneficiaries to prosper because they are living in better environments (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013). Also, all of the CBF's that were interviewed during this study expressed a desire to continue to help the beneficiaries that they used to work with and showed examples like taking people to the hospital and resolving conflicts of their continued support (CBF Focus Group, personal communication, April 24, 2013; CBF #1, personal communication, April 16, 2013; CBF #2, personal communication, April 16, 2013). If this technique is continuously employed even after the youth program has ended then this would help to monitor this youth programs so that they could ensure that the good of the project is continuing.

Multifaceted approach to empowerment. Multifaceted approaches are useful sustainability tools because it addresses different problems that may cause a compromise to progress after the program has ended if not addressed during the project implementation period. VSLA was stated by one of the youth groups in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project as being good for emergencies but not for long term saving because they will never be

able to save up enough funds to support their own activities (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group, personal communication, May 2, 2013). Therefore IGA's are used to promote sustainability because these give these people ways to earn enough income to save in their VSLA groups so that they can further grow their savings and their prosperity in the future and later invest the money back into other IGAs (Youth Empowerment and Human Rights Focus Group #1, personal communication, April 27, 2013). This will also be true in the NUWYLEI project since after the VSLA groups are created they will be encouraged to also create IGA activities (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2012). It is still helpful to have other trainings that do not relate to economics though, like human rights because this type of knowledge will not go away just because the project has ended and will allow these youths to further promote peace and be able to deal with their own conflicts in their own area (GWED-G Staff #2, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Inclusion of local government. If local government is included in the project then they can continue to support the youths even if funding runs out or the project ends. The Awach Sub county Official that was before discussed who works in the implementing area Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project, said that if he was involved that he would be willing to help progress continue even if the program ended or if funding ran out. If he was engaged and knew more about the project he would be in a better position to help if the project ended (Awach Sub county Official, personal communication, April 25, 2013). This can be compared to the attitude of one of the Patiko sub county officials in the NUWYLEI project who had been fully engaged by GWED-G staff and who felt a strong attachment to the program and who expressed his interest in continuing the project even after the funding has ended (Patiko Sub county Official, personal communication, April 15, 2013). The second situation is more desirable because it provides a way of ensuring that youths still have support even when GWED-G is no longer there. In one scholarly article it is shown that in order to have sustainable programs NGOs have started to realize that they need to be in connection with local and national governments since they are the ones who control resources and have ultimate authority and power over the beneficiaries in the target community (Buturo).

Strong GWED-G internal governance with delegation of responsibility. The monitoring and evaluation techniques that are used by GWED-G are very effective in identifying the gaps in the organizations policies and are also good at detecting and monitoring sustainability of

programs (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013). This could be seen when looking at some of the previous reports in the HOPE project file because every report identified gaps and provided suggestions for solutions which, over time as could be seen in the reports, were addressed by the organization (Gulu Women's Economic Development and Globalization, 2009). And even once a project like the HOPE project ends, the monitoring still continues to see and evaluate if the communities are still able to continue with their progress (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2012). While working with the NUWYLEI project a team was compiled to go and monitor one of the older HOPE women's groups to see if they are still continuing successfully with their VSLA activities. During the time there it was found that this group was using an outdated form of VSLA and therefore needed to be retrained on the new version, even though the HOPE project had formally been closed. This continuation of monitoring allows the community somewhat of a transition so that they are not completely abandoned once the project is over (GWED-G Executive #1, personal communication, April 15, 2013).

Cooperation with partner organizations.

Cooperation with implementing partners. As stated previously, having an open dialogue between implementing partners allows for these organizations to share ideas on effectiveness, but in the same way these organizations are also able to better understand what makes their respective programs sustainable as well. Even though it may not be possible for implementing partners to share ideas on sustainability when the project is still running, different staff can still share their previous experiences with similar projects which can be just as effective at helping to improve these types of program (DNU Staff, personal communication, April 29, 2013). One of the staff members that works for the implementing partner of GWED-G in the NUWYLEI project said that he had extensive experience working in the area of youth empowerment and had extensive knowledge relating to different sustainability strategies such as different ways of handling and supporting the CBFs; and that through coordination meetings between himself and GWED-G staff he will be able to share this kind of information with GWED-G so that they can start preparing now for the challenges that might be faced at the end of the program (DNU Staff Member, personal communication, April 29, 2013). Without open lines of communication between implementing partners in the youth programs, GWED-G would lose out on potentially

useful information regarding sustainability of their programs, which could leave beneficiaries in a more vulnerable situation.

Choosing cooperative donor/coordinating partners. When NGOs like GWED-G work with donors that are not willing to work with them it can create problems with sustainability of the projects in question. One of the challenges to sustainability of donor aided projects as stated in the Busiinge's thesis was that a top down approach was used where the realities of the ground were ignored and makes the beneficiary communities feel dependent and disempowered (Busiinge, 2010, p. 75). Since GWED-G works with donor organizations that are willing to listen to their suggestions, this top down dependency effect is able to be avoided and a more effective bottom up approach can be employed; where donors are able to learn from GWED-G (ACORD Staff, personal communication, May 13, 2013). In the same way that information about the grassroots structures is able to help donor organizations to make their programs more effective, they are also able to make these projects more sustainable which is why GWED-G places such an importance on proper selections of donors (GWED-G Executive #2, personal communication, April 23, 2013).

Conclusions

After looking at five different strategies that GWED-G uses to maintain effectiveness and sustainability of their projects, it is found through this study that the main ideas of these strategies that GWED-G uses are largely able to effect sustainable and positive change in accordance with the main aim of empowering and helping the youths. Even though it was found that there are some problems in implementation of some of these strategies in the programs, these problems related to varying implementation of the strategies on the part of the case study organization rather than a problem with the strategies discussed. And through comparison of the two different youth programs, possible solutions were found to fix the gaps in effectiveness and sustainability and therefore made this research not uselessly critical but constructive. Overall respondents in this study gave a great deal of praise to GWED-G and all beneficiaries and CBFs of the two programs that were spoken to were grateful for the project and the help that they had received. While this study cannot claim to know the overall impression of the project beneficiaries and the overall good of these strategies employed due to time constraints, the information gathered in the form of primary and secondary sources is able to make a convincing

argument that these strategies if employed in certain ways that were explained in this study, will promote effectiveness and sustainability within the implementing organization.

Other development NGOs and CBOs, especially those located in northern Uganda, can learn from the successes and the challenges that GWED-G has faced in implementing these sorts of programs and hopefully will be able to adopt these methods to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their own development programs, especially those that focus on youth empowerment. It was found in this research that an NGO can promote effective and sustainable change without creating dependency, but this requires the use of strategies that extends from relationships between staff and outside partners all the way to implementation of projects and working with grassroots structures. There will continue to be challenges in the development world even if these strategies are used but this research can be a guide to help understand and resolve these challenges when they occur, not only for GWED-G staff but also for other development organizations.

This study relates and supports the post-conflict transformation process of northern Uganda because it has remained and evaluated five different strategies that will help to promote the long-term effectiveness of development projects that are aimed at helping some of those individuals who were most affected by the conflict, the youth. If these strategies are not employed then it may take longer to be able to rehabilitate the youths that are the direct beneficiaries of these programs and these organizations might actually cause more harm, especially if they create a sense of dependence among these young people. However if these strategies are able to be utilized properly, then those NGOs that use these strategies will be able to further help their beneficiaries and therefore speed up the post-conflict transformation process for these individuals. Once youths are properly empowered and rehabilitated in this region then they will be able to boost the economy of northern Uganda and help to ensure that the conflict that the area experienced during the 1990s and the early 2000s will never occur again in the future.

Recommendations

For GWED-G

1. Discussions should be held between project officers of the NUWYLEI and Youth Empowerment and Human Rights projects. Both officers have good ideas and different experiences in the development field and an open and focused dialogue

would be useful to help make their respective programs more effective. During research it was found that there was a plan for these officers to meet but this study emphasizes the importance of this meeting and encourages the executive to ensure that it takes place.

2. For future youth projects it would be useful to look at the costs and benefits of having CBFs as opposed to local beneficiary leaders. Possibly conversations could be had in the future with coordinating organizations to employ the method of leadership that GWED-G finds to be most cost effective and sustainable.
3. It may be in GWED-G's best interest to make sure that all of their projects are actively engaging local government officials. Even though it was found in this study that all projects at GWED-G are supposed to engage local government it was found that there was a difference between how local government was incorporated into the two different projects studied.

For Other NGOs

1. For those NGOs that work with youth empowerment in northern Uganda it would be useful to consider implementation of the five main strategies explained in this research. Although these strategies will not be able to be implemented in every situation and for every organization, in cases where these strategies can be implemented it may be able to promote a greater sense of effectiveness and sustainability within these other organizations.
2. For those NGOs that do not work specifically with youth empowerment or work outside of northern Uganda, these strategies may still be useful to consider. These are strategies that are not just specific to youth but can be useful in empowering other groups of vulnerable individuals as well.
3. If these strategies are implemented in other organizations however, care needs to be taken to make sure that they are implemented correctly and with the beneficiaries at the forefront. These strategies will not be effective or sustainable if the implementing organization has self-serving motives.

For Further Research

1. Further research can be done in the area of effectiveness of CBFs vs. beneficiary leaders. Possibly other organizations can be studied outside of GWED-G to see which strategy is truly the more effective of the two. This study does not make a definite decision one way or another to decide if one method is more effective but only makes suggestions based on the findings of this research.
2. Research on effectiveness and sustainability strategies within other development organizations in northern Uganda should be employed to find other strategies that would promote these concepts. This research does not address all potential effectiveness and sustainability strategies that could be employed in development agencies and there is much more that can be learned on this topic by looking at other organizations and their implementation strategies.

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Appendix A



Personal photograph of the members of one of the youth groups in the Youth Empowerment and Human Rights project standing in front of their fish pond (one of their IGAs)

Appendix B



Personal photograph of the local sub county officials in the NUWYLEI project. The LC-III of the particular sub county that GWED-G was working in is here praising the organization and the work that they have done.

Appendix C



Personal photograph of one of the trainings for CBFs where I participated in presenting on women's empowerment.